

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 3850

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EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: TURKISH DEVELOPMENTS

REF: STATE 110926

1. ON MAY 14 DCM AND EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON YUKSEL SOYLEMEZ, MFA'S DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, TO DISCUSS RECENT NARCOTICS DEVELOPMENTS IN TURKEY. FOLLOWING WERE THE MAIN POINTS COVERED IN THE CONVERSATION:

A. DRAWING ON REFTEL,DCM EXPRESSED THE HOPE FOR AN EARLY AND SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOT AND THE UN REGARDING THE POPPY STRAW PRICE, AND THE THE GOT WOULD SOON ANNOUNCE THE PRICE TO BE PAID TO FARMERS IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE POPPY CONTROL SYSTEM. IN REPLY, SOYLEMEZ AGREED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A PRICE SATISFACTORY TO THE FARMERS WAS THE KEY ELEMENT OF THE CONTROL SYSTEM. HE SAID THAT THEORETICAL STUDIES AND CALCULATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. WHAT REMAINED TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WAS A SENSITIVE "POLITICAL" DECISION WHICH COULD BE MADE ONLY BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE INDICATED THAT PRICE MATTER
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WAS NOW OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE BUREAUCRACY.

B. REGARDING THE GOT'S POPPY CONTROL PROGRAM, THE DCM NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN DEALING WITH THE AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION TO HAVE INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS (E.G., FROM THE UN) VISIT THE POPPY GROWING AREA DURING THE HARVEST PERIOD IN ORDER TO WITNESS HOW THE CONTROL PROGRAM IS WORKING. SOYLEMEZ SAID THAT THE GOT IS "ENCOURAGING" VISITS TO THE POPPY REGION BY INTERESTED OBSERVERS, ESPECIALLY THE PRESS.

C. FINALLY, THE DCM DISCUSSED THE PROPOSED INCREASES IN DEA STAFFING FOR TURKEY (ANKARA 1480), STRESSING THE REGION-WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ANKARA DEA OFFICE. SOYLEMEZ NOTED THAT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHER INTERESTED MINISTRIES (E.G., INTERIOR) AND ASKED FOR A BOUT DE PAPIER DESCRIBING THE PROPOSAL. (THIS IS BEING SENT TO SOYLEMEZ.)

2. COMMENT: IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE GOT SHARES THE BELIEF LONG HELD BY THIS EMBASSY THAT THE PRICE TO BE PAID TO THE FARMER FOR POPPY STRAW IS THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL SYSTEM. THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE GOT ATTACHES TO THIS IS DEMONSTRATED BY FACT THAT THE DECISION WILL BE TAKEN AT THE CABINET LEVEL. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE QUESTION IS BOGGED DOWN IN TURKISH BUREAUCRACY. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO RECOMMEND TO SECRETARY THAT HE MAKE REFERENCE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POPPY CONTROL MECHANISM TO PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL WHEN THEY MEET NEXT WEEK.
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